

WE ARE AMONG YOU

Exploring the urban conditions through Majaka

**MA
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30km Walk, September 2022



FOREWORD

The present issue is the first of upcoming semi-annual publications by the Urban Studies master program students of 2022 (MUR22) and students from the European Union exchange program. This magazine compiles six on-field works carried out in Urbanisation Studio 1. In the following pages, we publicise the gathered knowledge through different approaches, engaging with the term and process of urbanisation. Starting with a 30 km walk (p. 9), where we explored the suburban conditions of Harju County by stepping through it. From there on, reading and assembling related theories, test our hypotheses on the field, and have individual consultations (discussing our projects and their outcomes). Then, by participating in the Diagonal Trip (p. 24) to understand the dynamics influencing the urban-rural ground and relations around Estonia. We finally developed and presented our findings in public presentations.

30km Walk, September



Majaka Toujours: We are Among You

30km Walk

ber 2022



The Urbanization Studio I began with a four-day intensive walking tour, from Friday to Monday.

We arrived at the walk with nothing else being disclosed to us; we were not provided any information.

We embarked on an adventure into the unknown with little more than a backpack, a sleeping bag, and a great deal of curiosity about where we would be going and why we were going there. We were about to go on an expedition into the unknown.

In addition to that, we were given an additional item that was given to us.

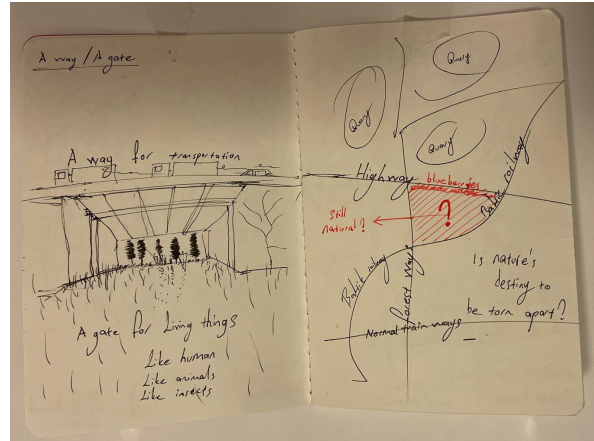
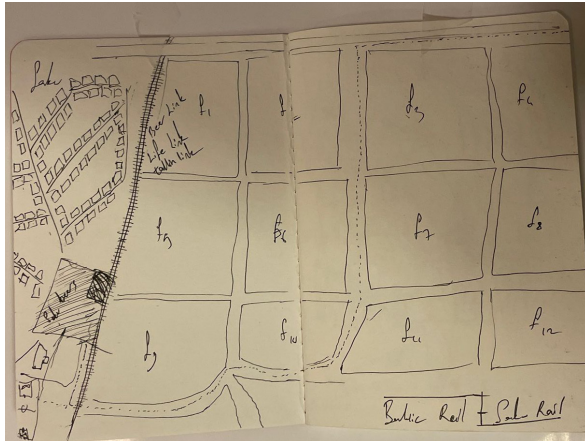
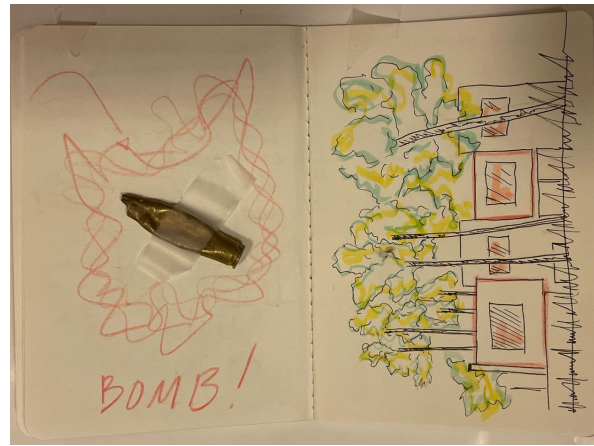
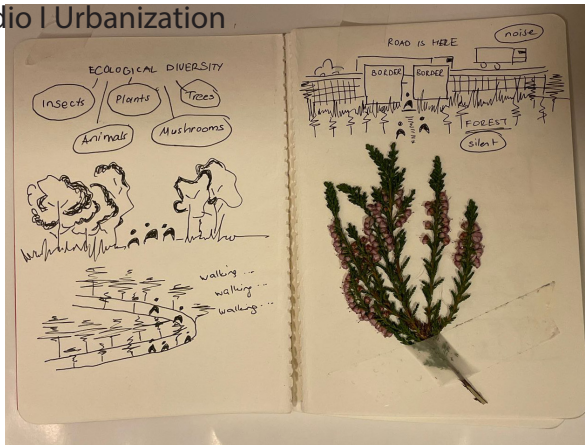
We were instructed to write our thoughts, opinions, and observations of our surroundings, in a stream-of-consciousness method, in these tiny notebooks given to us.

Some of us were able to go with the flow and absorb the surroundings as the walk progressed.

Discussions about anything and everything were consistent and went very smoothly. Throughout the hike, we talked about what we were doing, why we were doing it, and whether or not we were looking for something in particular.

The walk's purpose was to retrace the route that the RailBaltic train ride would take; the scope was to understand the length of the path better and determine if it was required. As we walked through new and in-the-making villages that we visited and stopped by, we realized that most are inadequately connected to Tallinn.

Studio I Urbanization



These villages gave off a weird vibe; they are wonderfully designed to the point where they exist in a harmonious balance between nature and human settlements. Despite this, the villages gave off a vibe that made people uncomfortable. They gave the impression that they were trying to market the “white picket fence” utopian fantasy, which is to be too good to be true.

They seemed to be constructed to lure in residents and divert their attention away from the real problems: an inadequate infrastructure system and an economy that has been stagnant for the past few years. The fundamental issues are as follows: a) a weak infrastructure system and b) an economy that has been in a holding pattern for the past few years, which has caused Estonians to leave the villages in the countryside and move to the larger cities.

That is the phenomenon referred to as shrinking cities (which we will dig into on the Estonia diagonal trip).

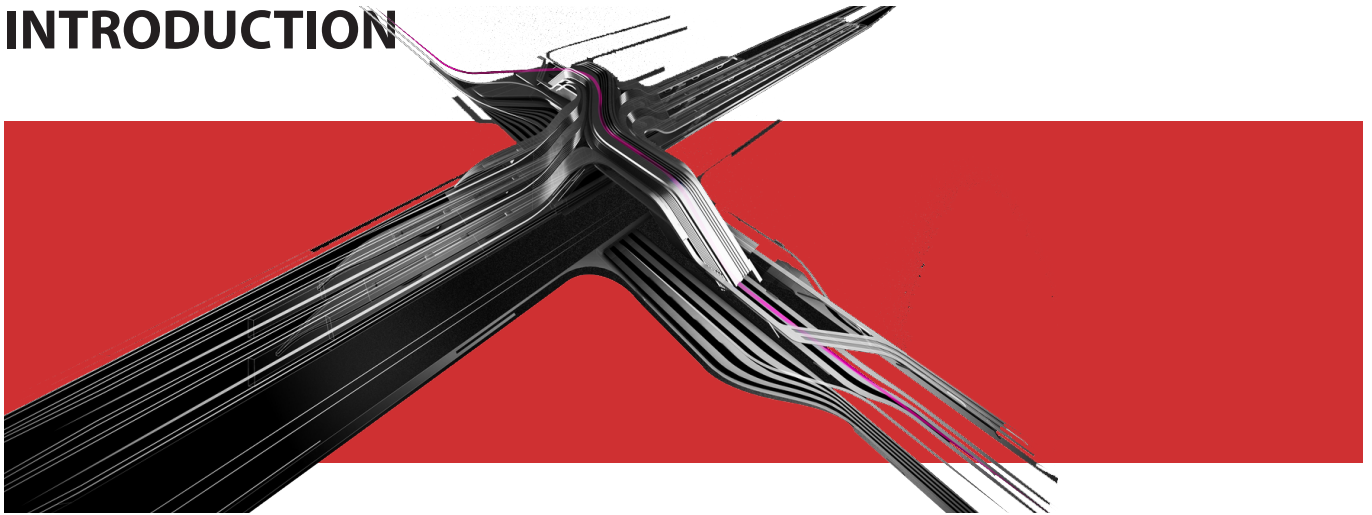
Harvey’s concepts of space and how it differs regarding one’s perceptions or methods to move around it might also be used as a lens through which one can better understand how the lack of an adequate infrastructure system can alter depending on which way you travel when it comes to the commuting and space distance between these little cities and Tallinn.¹ Due to this, a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the subject would be possible. In addition to this, one might know that modern maps are created not only based on the physical space but also on the amount of time it takes to travel from point A to point B, as well as explicitly which technique should be used (train, bus, car, bike, foot).

1- Harvey, David. (2008). Space as a Keyword. 10.1002/9780470773581.ch14.



Ülemiste Train Station
ending point

INTRODUCTION



What constitutes the urban? How is it produced? For whom and by whom is it developed? Yet more importantly, How Tallinn is a potential arena of discussion for the previous questions. The Studio created the conditions which enable us to intercede in an urban context, using Urban Intervention as our primary research technique. Therefore, we got involved with a sample: a neighbourhood known as Majaka - the substance of our research.

Majaka is a district between the city centre and the airport under the speculation of a new considerable infrastructure project building. As Part of the Lasnamäe district, it stands out in its morphology and represents a more gradual, varied urban fabric with a mix of uses. Although being located near the centre and on its way to the outskirts, equipped with an excellent mobility infrastructure, and lots of housing, it is a liminal space in the imaginary of Tallinn. Primarily between Estonian and Russian-speaking communities, Majaka has been largely unnoticed by developers and gentrification. It feels to be neither here nor there. To what extent this ambivalence has been operating and what it might become after a major urban investment project, are the takeaways surrounding/regarding the case study.

Thenceforth, groups and individuals decided to look at particular aspects of the object of investigation, developing different working assumptions on what the urbanisation process could mean regarding Majaka and its surroundings. The case study was a framing device to create an abstract context in which our projects and interventions took place and gathered meaning.

These abstractions brought outcomes in different ways. Formats ranged from semi-subjective mapping methods (p.30) or the formulation of personas that start a virtual/speculative dialog (p.42). However, the relevant outcome was that these arbitrary abstractions, at some point, become perceivable and comprehensible again; they somehow should tell a story or make sense of the broader processes inherent in urban matters.

By interacting with the present social and material conditions in the area, our research focuses on how to create impact in the urban realm through small scale, self organised urban interventions. Via interventions, plus considering exhibitions and public events as a potential act of ethnographic methodology, we ponder them as an interactive and approachable way to present the study results.



First presentation of the urban interventions, Site of Ülemiste Train Station, 2022



Second presentation of the urban interventions, Majaka 2022



IMPASSE

Aleyna Canpolat & Alp Eren Özalp

Majaka consists of public spaces, private spaces, and semi-private spaces. As the surroundings of Majaka were examined, it became possible to say that the area is located within the borders of mega shopping malls, Pae park, and the Rail Baltic project. Majaka is a region rich in ethnic diversity, with easy access to many places and low-rise Soviet apartment buildings with green spaces in front of them. Due to its proximity to the city center and lower housing prices, it has recently become an accessible location for many foreign nationals. Therefore, it is possible to see that ethnic diversity has increased and the current identity has changed in Majaka as well. All of this taken into account Majaka can host a potential user and have suitable areas for people to socialize and mingle.

However, Majaka also has invisible borders apart from the visible borders mentioned, and many of these borders appear as undefined borders. Even though the green areas in front of each residential block seem to be public, they are only used by residents of that house. Fences and demarcations are largely absent apart from a few walls and curbs. The lack of public elements also affects the use of green spaces by residents. The problem here is that although there is an area like Pae Park right next to Majaka, access to this area is blocked by a large empty space and a 3.5-meter wall. Although there are green areas in Majaka that will enable social diversity, the lack of social facilities and a common roof pose a problem to interact with people with each other.

Intervention 1

We proceeded in line with the questions of who forms the cities and what is the place and thoughts of the people in the planning of the areas and who is taken into account. Considering the market-oriented impact of the future Rail Baltic project on residential buildings, workplaces and public spaces, we discussed the empty space next to Pae Park and at the end of Sikupilli Street. We've progressed in this field by interviewing people and asking questions. These questions

were about whether they wanted to strengthen the relationship between green spaces and neighborliness or whether they really wanted Majaka to change and include modern housing estates. When we consider governments and private equity that undertake in the city, mass housing projects, infrastructural or small housing projects, and repurposing ex-industrial sites for the creative economy have always been their decision.

As mentioned in the literature of Jane Jacob's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, in the field of urbanism, designs should be human-centered. We should build cities for people. Not cars, not streets, not buildings. People. In addition, according to Lefebvre's 'right to the city's' approach, urbanization plays an important role in bringing citizens together, establishing relationships, and producing their own spaces. For this reason, we proceeded with our analysis with a public focus. We asked them what they need about this area and what kind of changes their environment need.

We prepared two different posters for that purpose. One poster argued that this area should be used as a green space and given to the public, while the other gave the message that Majaka should be transformed. There were QR codes on the posters. The residents who scan these QR codes were faced with a questionnaire related to this area. Thanks to this questionnaire, we learned that people want to use this empty space as a green space, to become a public space where they can spend time and provide a transition to Pae Park. When we look at the results of the surveys, about 75 percent of the participants have expressed their opinions about having green areas and areas that allow social activities instead of buildings in the designated area.

Intervention 2

Instead of focusing users on a single area, we needed to raise awareness of larger systemic urban problems in them. We started to think broadly about what these areas are used for, who makes the city, what kinds of planning methods are made for who/whom, and who will get to use them. The main goal here was to reactivate the Majaka and to set this empty space as the starting point of the solution. This solution was to allow the social gathering spaces in Pae Park to infiltrate Majaka. For this purpose, we created a circular route through Majaka, keeping in mind that cities should be designed for people. This route included problems of public space in Majaka, arrangement of sidewalks, access to Pae Park, reintroducing unused areas to the public, urban elements (which can be used during Yard Coffee Day), experiencing borders, and overcoming borders.

Along the route, spots were selected and functional areas were redesigned for the needs of the residents. The route provides information to local and foreign people through a board. We call the board a 'mental map'. In this 'mental map board' one can see detailed information of the spots and the time it takes to access these. The route could create paths suitable for pedestrians and cyclists, and could respond to different functions such as benches, parks, barbecue areas and different sports activities. Thanks to these functions, people from different cultures can find a common roof through Majaka. An accessible design has been created that appeals to users of all ages.

In addition, in this empty space, we placed a ladder in front of the fence to create public awareness for accessibility. Thanks to the ladder we created in the empty space, the people who attended the presentation realized that the wall here is a physical boundary. We think that the perspective we have presented to them, helped them to think that there can be a transition from

here and that this empty space can be useful to the public.

With the visual board, route, and physical urban solutions, the participant understood more easily what needs to be completed, what is needed and what kind of planning should be done in this area. I think it offers a different perspective on how the same units can be transformed into different functions, thanks to the transformation of the designed urban element from a sitting unit to a ladder.

Ultimately, this route design and the reactivation of the empty space were meant to interact with the ethnic diversity of Majaka and create a universal culture within the borders. The important thing here is that the participation of the society takes place while the integration of these social frameworks is carried out in Majaka.



In these photos, you can see the public elements and mental map board produced as a solution to the problems. At the same time, thanks to the staircase designed in the empty space, it is possible to see the relationship with Pae Park.

Public elements for the common route in Majaka



Final public presentation in blank area



NEIGHBOURHOOD LOOPATH

← PAE PARGI
PAE PARK 6 min.

GARAGEMAJAKA
ENTERTAINMENT PLACE 3 min.

PUHKEPUNKT
REST POINT 4 min.

SIKUPILLI TRAMMIJAAM
SIKUPILLI TRAM STATION 5 min.

MAJAKA PÕIK
MAJAKA STREET 5 min.

YARD KOHVIK
YARD CAFE 6 min.

RAIL BALTICA
RAIL BALTIC ESTONIA 8 min.

T1 MALL TALLINN
SHOPPING CENTER 9 min.

IMPASSE

Within the scope of the master concept the area was examined to define and solutions were produced. These are used for more defined spaces to be created in Majaka, and interventions that would guide activities, being simple, logical and usable from its entrance. The main goal is to bring the "blank space" of the end of Sõõripõli street into Majaka. Thus, a walking/cycling route was made starting from Pae park, aimed at incorporating the park and other promised areas into Majaka. Along the route, gaps were identified and functional areas were redesigned for the benefit and foreign people through a board we call the mental map. In this "mental map board", you can see the detailed information of the route and the time it takes to walk/cycle and certain, and responds to different functions such as benches, a post, a barbecue area coupled with different types activities.

Let's experience and overcome borders within Majaka.

IMPASSE

Peetud alal on uuritud võimalikke ja loodi lahendusi. Need on kasutatavad, loogilised ja kasutatavad. Peamine eesmärk on tuua Sõõripõli tähe lõppruumi sisse Majaka. Seega, loodi jalgrattajate ja kõnnijate jaoks teekond, mis ühendab Sõõripõli tähe ja teised lubatud alad Majaka. Teekonna mööda on leitud funktsionaalsed alad ja need on rediseini teinud inimeste kasuks ja võõrriistade jaoks. Selle "mõttemaastiku" abil saate näha teekonda ja teada, kui palju aega kulub teekonda mööda liikumiseks ja teatud funktsioonidele, nagu puitbänkid, post, grillikoht ja teised funktsioonid, mis on seotud erinevate tegevustega.

Majakas kogeme ja ületame piirid.

1 - PAE PARK
2 - PASSAGE TO PAE
3 - YARD CAFE
4 - PLAYING GROUND
5 - YOUTH AREA
6 - WHITE TOWERS
7 - FAR FAR AWAY

PAE PARGI
PAE PARK
YARD KOHVIK
MÄNGUVALJAK
NOORTE VALDKOND
VALGE TORNIID
VAGA KAUGEL

Icons: wheelchair, stroller, baby carriage, bicycle, dog, bench, trash bin, bicycle rack, bicycle, bicycle repair, bicycle helmet, bicycle lock, bicycle pump, bicycle bell, bicycle horn, bicycle light, bicycle mirror, bicycle seat, bicycle handlebars, bicycle grips, bicycle pedals, bicycle chain, bicycle sprocket, bicycle cassette, bicycle gears, bicycle wheels, bicycle tires, bicycle spokes, bicycle hub, bicycle axle, bicycle bearings, bicycle nuts, bicycle bolts, bicycle washers, bicycle spacers, bicycle fenders, bicycle mudguards, bicycle chainrings, bicycle cranks, bicycle bottom bracket, bicycle seatpost, bicycle seat, bicycle handlebars, bicycle grips, bicycle stem, bicycle headset, bicycle fork, bicycle frame, bicycle down tube, bicycle top tube, bicycle seat tube, bicycle seat stay, bicycle rear stay, bicycle rear rack, bicycle fender, bicycle mudguard, bicycle chain, bicycle sprocket, bicycle cassette, bicycle gears, bicycle wheels, bicycle tires, bicycle spokes, bicycle hub, bicycle axle, bicycle bearings, bicycle nuts, bicycle bolts, bicycle washers, bicycle spacers, bicycle fenders, bicycle mudguards, bicycle chainrings, bicycle cranks, bicycle bottom bracket, bicycle seatpost, bicycle seat, bicycle handlebars, bicycle grips, bicycle stem, bicycle headset, bicycle fork, bicycle frame, bicycle down tube, bicycle top tube, bicycle seat tube, bicycle seat stay, bicycle rear stay, bicycle rear rack, bicycle fender, bicycle mudguard.

Mental map board

Analysing Surface, Analysing



ASAP

Potential



The project I was looking at is the Rail Baltic Train station in Tallinn. It is expected to be built by Zaha Hadid Architects and will be situated between Ülemiste City and Majaka. The anticipated year of completion is the year 2025¹. The appearance of the building promises flawless and smooth transportation and movement of body's and goods. It's fluid Surfaces are an expression of most advanced production methods and technologies. It is a symbol for progress and, according to people asked on the streets in the area, a gesture towards an unpredictable but exciting future². From my investigation of its presentation by the studio and other stakeholders, my interest shifted towards Ülemiste City, which is situated close to the station. Both physically as well as theoretically. The station is part of its future vision and in (semi-) public presentations, always considered as an integral part of the smart city³.

Producing smoothness and flawless transportation (in this case of data and products, rather than people) makes its occupation and ends similar to the ones implicit in the train station.

The presentation of this process of investigation took place in the Tallinn school of Service - Majaka. We rented a small auditorium there and I presented my findings and resulting thoughts in the manner of a lecture (at least did the physical surrounding and the positioning of the participants suggest an event like this). It wasn't necessarily planned as a lecture, more of a pitch or presentation which would happen within a company. I underestimated the power of the room though. Instead of me sitting around a table with other "colleagues" - which would have been the right setting for my planned presentation - I now was exposed like a doctorant defending his thesis. I couldn't hide my excitement and discomfort and the supposedly cool and funny pitch turned out to be a nervously stumbling p.p.p.

1 <https://rbulemiste.ee/en/>

2 Interviews made on the streets of majaka.

3 I took part in a "road trip" through Ülemiste aimed at informing IT students about their potential future working environment. <https://www.ulemistecity.ee/en/>

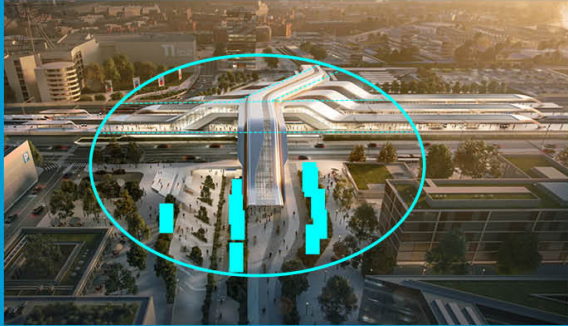
ASAP



Trainstation Ulemiste designed by Zaha Hadid Architects



ASAP



Patrick Schuhmacher - Head of Zaha Hadid Architects





1000KM / Diagonal Trip in Estonia

We set off on a cold Tallinn morning before the sun had not risen yet.

This trip was a compressed program that would last 3 days. It was a rich journey, starting from Tallinn, from the easternmost point of Estonia to the southernmost. The purpose of this trip was to observe the culture, history, architecture and geography of Estonia. The present and past situations of different towns and cities were explored from social and urban perspectives. Some of the locations were a secret uranium-rich town in Soviet times, while another was a very alkaline white lake formed by wastewater from an energy-producing factory.

Day 1

The journey, which departed in front of Muusa Majutus, began by waiting for Martin. Afterwards, we continued our journey by watching the sunrise and the beautiful nature of Estonia while eating the breakfast we bought from the market.

The first stop of this journey was Kiviõli Tuhamägi, the highest artificial mountain in the Baltics. This mountain is formed by the waste stones of the oil shale industry located nearby.¹ Currently, this area is used as an adventure center that allows skiing in winter and motor sports in summer.²

Our next stop was the town of Kiviõli, which has the same name as the mountain. Kiviõli, one of the many mining towns in Ida-Virumaa. This town was a soviet settlement established after the oil shale factory in 1928.³ This town is an example of urban shrinkage. After the expansion of the energy factory was stopped, the migration

of the townspeople began. The general scene in Kiviõli was derelict soviet apartments that were difficult to heat and maintain, worn facades, and silence.

The journey continued. At this stop, there was no sign of the city or the apartments. Ahead, something swayed in the branches of tall, broad-trunked trees. This is an old oak grove called Hiiu Tammik. This place is actually a place of worship, visitors believe that animals, stones and trees have souls. They hug the trees and talk to them, and they spend time sitting under the oak trees. In order to experience this environment, we hugged trees and observed nature. However, mining in the region was also affecting this area. There was a mountain of waste stones 50 meters behind the oak trees. Unfortunately, some oaks remained under these rocks.⁴

Our new stop was Sillamäe, one of the most interesting towns. In 1946, with the consent of Stalin and Beria, the construction of a factory for the production of nuclear bombs began in the region.⁵ For this reason, it was forbidden to enter this city without permission until 1990. We passed the Sillamäe cultural center and went down the stairs at the beginning of the Mere Street. The facades of the buildings along Mere street were under protection as they were from the Stalin era. Then we reached the shore and the area where the waste uranium was stored was clearly visible. Another thing seen in the city was the frequency of signs in russian. As we moved eastward from Tallinn, towards Russia, the population of living Russians was also increasing. The proportion of Russians living in Sillamäe today is 85%.⁶

1-“Ajalugu,” Kkt 100 Aastat Väge, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://www.keemiatoostus.ee/ettevottest/ajalugu/>.

2-“Ski Center,” Kiviõli Seikluskeskus, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://seikluskeskus.ee/en/>.

3-“Ajalugu,” Kkt 100 Aastat Väge, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://www.keemiatoostus.ee/ettevottest/ajalugu/>.

4-Valeria Ivanova, “Sacred Oaks of Tammiku,” last modified October 10, 2020, <https://www.hiis.ee/kuva/fi/kuvavoistlus/2020/svyashchennye-duby-tammiku-5901>.

5-“History,” Sillamae, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://www.sillamae.ee/en/web/eng/general-history>.

6-Przemysław Bociąga, “Sillamäe, The Top-Secret Estonian Stalinist Town,” last modified September 28, 2022, <https://3seaseurope.com/sillamae-top-secret-estonian-stalinist-town/>.

Studio I Urbanization

After visiting the Baltic Sea, it was time to see the village of Viivikonna, which had its share of mining. Most of the buildings built in Viivikonna, which was founded in 1935, were built by workers working in the mine. In the 1950s, approximately 1800 people lived here.⁷ As the mine progressed over time, people left their settlements and settled in areas closer to the mine. Over time, the abandoned town was looted, the windows and furniture of the houses were stolen. Roofs made of wood have been demolished over time. Today, 38 people live here, and nothing is found here except the greenhouses that the residents have built.⁸

As we approached the end of the first day, we were now close to Narva. In front of us was the territory of Russia and the river Narova, which separated it from Estonia. We drove through Narva-Jõesuu, where there are summer houses and hotels on the way. We then visited at the Narva tank monument, which is now locked in the military museum in Tallinn. The red monuments, which caused controversy after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, were removed by the government's decision. There was neither a tank nor a pedestal at the site of the monument. It was dark and everyone was hungry now. We finished the first day at Narva Art Residence to spend the night and cook. This residence was the Krenholm Manufacturing Company director's family home, with whom most people in Narva relate. After a tiring but full day, we deserved to rest in the sauna all night long.

Abandoned house in Viivikonna



7-Francisco Martinez, "What used to be Viivikonna," last modified June 21, 2022, <https://emptiness.eu/field-reports/what-used-to-be-viivikonna/>

8-"Viivikonna," City facts, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://www.city-facts.com/viivikonna>.

Day 2

Starting the day early again, we started to step into Narva, the 3rd largest city of Estonia. This is a city that was almost completely destroyed in World War II. It is a settlement with approximately 96% Russian population.⁹ The first stop of the day was Narva Venice, famous for its canals and the use of Soviet garages.¹⁰ This area with 780 garages is a place where people live, saunas and parties. Johanna Rannula, director of the Narva art residence, presented the garage structures and their projects, NART Embassy in Narva Venice or Venice Embassy, which took place here in the summer of 2022. Here, the club room and the social spaces created by the artists were observed. After experiencing the different installations set up among the Venice-like canals, we passed under the high energy lines stretching from Estonia to Russia. After hearing the sound of electricity, we wandered the streets of Kulgu Sadam and observed the “dacha” typology.

It was close to noon, and we were now exploring the center of Narva. We examined the train station building passing through the city and the soldier motifs on its facade. Then we drove under one of Narva’s well-known landmarks, the house with the water tower, towards the historic city centre. This building is one of the first buildings to have an elevator in Narva.¹¹ After walking a little further, we took a long walk by the river, with a view of the Russian lands. On one side of the scenery on the river promenade, it was possible to see the Ivangorod Castle, on the other side the Hermann Castle, which was used as a museum, and the Friendship Bridge connecting the two countries. At this point, we can say that we have experienced the extreme dimensions of the visible part of the boundary concept.

The wheels were starting to spin again. Our route was now towards the southern lands. Our first stop on the way was a dangerous lake famous for its turquoise water. Near this lake was Estonia’s

largest power plant. This lake was formed by the accumulation of water used to purify the waste stones. Due to the high alkalinity of the water, the surfaces it came into contact with turned white. As we left here, we had a better understanding of how mining in Estonia is a dominant industry in the northern lands. It becomes even more possible to imagine mines as an organism that scrapes the soil with its teeth, drags people wherever it goes, and at the same time leaves its mark.

We were now passing by the shore of Lake Peipsi. On the way, we continued by purchasing fish species unique to this lake. Crossing through the town of Mustvee, famous for its onions, we continued on our way. Then we turned off the main road again and proceeded deeper into the forest. Where we arrived was a large abandoned farm complex. It was a collective farm established in Soviet times, called ‘Kolhoos’. After all the land became the property of the state in 1928-29, these collective farms started to be opened throughout the country.

We were on our way to a farmhouse located almost in the far east of the country to spend the night. Our last stop before dark was the town of Võru. Here we were going to shop for the evening and examine the redesigned town square within the scope of the “Estonia 100” project. This project was initiated to renovate city centers, bring people together, increase the sense of community and make the living environment of small towns more attractive. The renovated centers have been transformed into places where cultural events are held and leisure time is spent, and it is arranged to give priority to pedestrians in traffic. The Estonia 100 project is a nationwide project to prevent out-migration in many rural areas outside the town of Võru.¹²

9-Siim Lovi, “Narva’s Estonian population has increased,” last modified July 1, 2022, <https://news.err.ee/1608645421/narva-s-estonian-population-has-increased>.

10-“Venice,” Narva Art Residency, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://www.nart.ee/en/projects/narva-venice/>.

11-“House with a water tower,” Trip to Estonia, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://triptoestonia.com/en/narva/sights/house-with-a-water-tower/>.

12-“Urban Regeneration Tools for Shrinking Communities,” La Biennale di Venezia, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://positivelyshrinking.ee/>.



Day 3

We woke up dynamically to the last day after resting at night in the sauna and jumping into a cold lake. While we were moving slowly through the forest covered with fog, our first stop was the MAAJAAM art residence not far away. This was a farm that produced art and technology. Maa-jaam is run by artists Timo Toots and Mari-Liis Rebane and their family.¹³ Accompanied by Timo, we explored the different parts they built on the farm and their workshops. This is an untouched land among the hills in the heart of nature. After exchanging ideas with the Ukrainian artists who stayed for a long time, we toured and observed the other units of the farm.

Our next stop was Sangaste Castle, which was built from 1874 to 1881.¹⁴ The owner of this castle is Young Berg, who brought and sold American agricultural tools to Estonia and thus contributed to the development of agriculture in Estonia. It is possible to see most of the trees in Estonia around this castle.

Our next stop was Linda Kolhoos, about 20 km away. This was a farm famous for its delicious smoked fish and chicken. Thanks to the products sold, a multi-purpose hall was built inside the farm. The paint of the hall has been preserved since 1973 and is in good condition. After a 5-minute walk out of the building and into the forest, we came across an abandoned sauna structure made in brutalist architectural style.

After exploring the area a little more, we moved to our last stop, the twin town Valga-Valka. This is a settlement between the Estonian and Latvian border. The first point where we started to explore the city in Valga was the train station, which played an important role in the growth of the city. This train station paved the way for the town to trade with its surroundings. After examining the renovated station building, we started to examine Valga town square, which is part of the Estonia 100 project. The aim of the project was to design attractive spaces for the return

¹³ -"About Maa-jaam," Maa-jaam, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://www.maajaam.ee/about/>.

¹⁴ -"History of the Sangaste Castle," Sangaste Loss, accessed January 26, 2023, <https://www.sangasteloss.ee/en/castle/>.

of immigrants and at the same time to protect the existing population. For this reason, some schools in the surrounding area were relocated in the town in order to increase the density of the city center. The city square has been redesigned to create a square that provides space for different activities.

The border running between the two towns was abolished in 2007. Valga-Valka, as a twin town, provides people with various opportunities. People living on the Latvian side go to the Estonian side to work, while people on the Estonian side go to the Latvian side to drink alcohol or go to restaurants. The last stop of the trip helps us

better understand the relations Estonia has established with its neighbors. On one side there are two castles and a big river, on the other side there is a tiny bridge and only a thin line on it to cross a sweet stream.

This tour, which extends from east to south in order to understand Estonia, was an informative trip for us to understand geography, culture and history. Seeing the shrinking towns, mines, art residences and examples of the Estonia 100 project in place at the end of the 1000 km that passes non-stop made all our tiredness worth it.



Presenting process in Majaka, December 2022



Layers of Happenings:

Personal Accounts of Open Spaces

Stacked and squeezed on the bus seat, my eyes and mind were entirely focused on the spatial landscape of Majaka. Somehow, I was able to read every detail of the composition framed by the bus window. Super-fast order calculation occurred to me: certain spatial scenarios start to appear to us once we get to know the place better. **Hence, I started to wonder how the time spent in one place informs our understanding of the spatial context?**

The studio was moulded upon the practice of urban walks which involved the local residents of Majaka. This interactive method appeared to be very suggestive, as it not only helped to grasp the locals' perspectives but also facilitated, for us, a better understanding of the urban environment. Therefore, we came up with the following conclusion at the end: **Majaka is a multilayered district with a complex history of urbanization and the neighborhood is nowadays dominated by shopping malls.** Hence, we consider the future urban development as unclear.

More precisely, the neighborhood's proximity to the center of Tallinn is clearly observable, but the Kardioru Plaza building hinders visual clarity. On the other hand, the Peterburi multi-line motorway cuts off the neighborhood from the possibility of merging into the new modern landscape of Ülemiste city. **Between the pressure of these megastructures rest various layers of urban planning that still exist and are visible throughout the site even though the ideologies behind them are not always readable.** In other words, what captured our interest from the very beginning was the quest to better understand the chronological change or the development of the housing typology with a focus on open spaces that developed around them.

Hence, Malau's and my priority became examining the elements that make public space worthy of interaction: **how some dynamics change depending on the environment, and to what extent can we replicate the same public content in places with a different character?** These research questions were interlinked with a single goal of testing different open areas. We allowed ourselves to go out in Majaka with a mobile box that contained different elements with which you can "build" a place to gather or interact. From today's point of view, I could say that we used the so-called object theatre as our fieldwork method, although we have not had it clearly defined as such in the very beginning. According to the object theatre notion, the performance is not necessarily actor-driven and based on a dramatic text for instance, but can take starting point in anything, for example, **in an object (the box).**



Although we faced different reactions that opened more horizons for us, what we have learned from the fieldwork is that we neither took into consideration the deeper understanding of different urban layers, nor the behavior that people acquired in that particular spatial environment. **We entered the subject through Oliver Orro's text: "Terrible beauty: The eerie charm of Stalinist urban space in Estonia".**

We decided to explore the different layers that are part of the overall complex processes of urbanization - how Majaka became Majaka - by focusing on three of them: the everyday life of the residents, the historical approach, and a 'what-if' scenario. **This diving into the open spaces in Majaka is based on the narrative of different personas who have a connection with the neighborhood.** If in the beginning, we were the ones who expose our thoughts and expectations on the open spaces in Majaka, in the second part we were the mediators who portray these different narratives through maps, photos, and sketches in the form of a physical installation.

After finishing our presentation, the most present questions in our (Malau and me) evaluation discussion were: Do you think that we can somehow move forward? Does it feel like the end? What can we do next? In other words, questions that should logically be asked before the creation of the final product, appeared after the process had seemingly ended. These very questions suggest how I think our project can be improved and what we lacked in the process of research and exposition. First, I think that we did not have a strong enough theoretical base to which we return and formulated a whole/ conclusion arising from the theory itself, the interviews we did (database), and the subjective experience. The second suggestion from me to me (us) would be to find the subjective interest in the sea of information and experiences that were collected during the fieldwork and hence model a single product as a result of the overall process but with a subjective conclusion. Step beyond! I believe that this would avoid the feeling of an incomplete or unfinished project in the future.

Installation in Majaka during the second presentation, December 2022





URBAN INTERVENTION: IN THEIR SHOES



This research made use of the following three methods:

1. Walk-along interviews allowed for the collection of a great deal of technical information regarding how an urban space ought to be built to be accessible.

2. Autoethnography: the experience of the autoethnography was to assess the accessibility of the area by recreating mobility and vision impairment in order to better grasp what it means to live with these disabilities. Because of this, I had the honor to witness firsthand how difficult it is to attempt to independently navigate the urban area of Majaka while having a disability.

3. Academic articles that aided in expanding the importance of how urban space design should incorporate and adhere to EU legislation on urban accessibility. These articles were chosen because they strengthened my knowledge of the topic.

Unfortunately, the results of the fieldwork and its initial hypotheses have demonstrated that the urban zone of Majaka is indeed inaccessible. In addition, rather than proving biases, this investigation has tried to demonstrate how much being fully able is taken for granted and assumed to be the norm. If there was a factor that could have been limiting this research, it would have been the inability to conduct more walk-along interviews due to the weather, as snowy and icy roads have made it nearly impossible for all the disabled people who were supposed to come along to take a simple stroll and discuss their opinion if Majaka is accessible or not.

Thoughts and considerations

I would like to believe that I was the right person for the job because the subject topic was not only of academic interest to me but also of personal interest, as I have witnessed the difficulties that my elderly or disabled loved ones face in their day-to-day lives. As a result, the combination of the fact that it was scientific research and being a personal, heartfelt topic has motivated me to further my research.

The urban intervention was fruitful, regardless of the fact that one of the participants did not fully perceive the challenges that disabled people face. This was understandable, as the primary objective was to ensure the safety and comfort of those participating.

The attendees in the urban intervention were required to engage in the autoethnography method; they were able to experience firsthand the implications of having a visual impairment, mobility impairment, or age-related impairment through the use of a wheelchair, an eye mask, and special glasses that recreates elder vision impairment, courteously rented by Tallinn Health College. The participants were given the directive to cross the main road and stroll on snow and ice-covered sidewalks; therefore, providing a sense of ease, a feeling of security, and safety by being aided through the assistants was the top priority. Indeed, if they had been exposed to a bigger but moderate amount of risk and uncertainty, it could have given them a more "realistic" experience. That said, four individuals were going through the firsthand experience, and five were assisting them, making a total of nine individuals who needed guidance through the hazardous streets, whether traffic-related or otherwise.

The primary goal of this urban intervention was to generate a conversation that took place immediately right after the urban intervention. It was hoped that people who participated would

reflect on it in the days that followed. In the days that followed. Indeed, some participants told me afterward that they had never thought about what it could be to have any impairment before this experience.

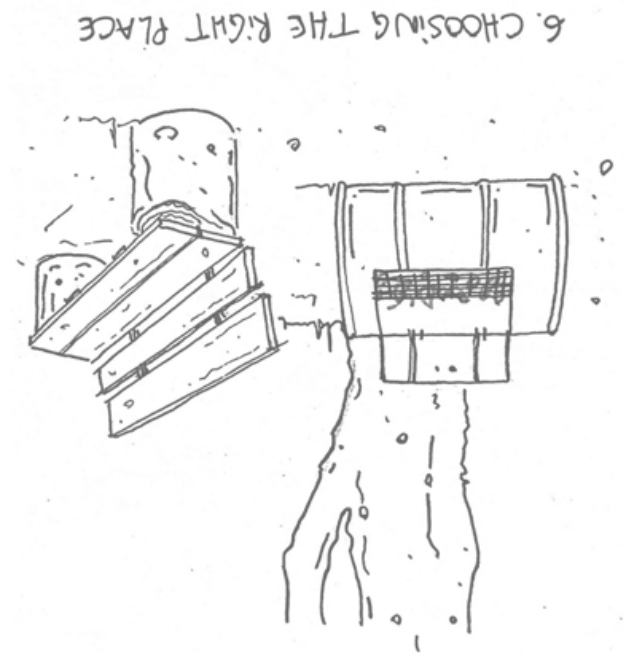
The broader relevance of my findings was to generate awareness and discussion not only on how the urban area of Majaka is inaccessible but also on how the municipal government is not applying and adhering to the EU legislation regarding urban space accessibility. As a consequence of this experience, I have raised my awareness and participated in a great deal of debate both prior to and during the execution of this urban intervention.

This urban intervention evidenced that the location and design of urban settings need to be well-planned in accordance with EU standards; most urban spaces, streets, and buildings that appear to be accessible are not always so. This intervention proved and taught me that an accessible area that, due to budget cuts, is built quickly can, and it is worse than an area that has not adhered to accessibility requirements.

Autoethnography is a research method I have discovered from this experience. This strategy has the capacity to provide an accurate, albeit simplistic, understanding of the problems and requirements of a city.

I believe that a great deal could have been covered about disabilities, further explanations of the regulations, and giving a more "immersive" experience to the participants in order to independently assess whether the location was accessible after being instructed on what to look for. On the other hand, none of these issues were explored due to the shortage of time and the fact that the streets were covered in snow, which prevented the visualization of architectural barriers.





The People's Grill

Implementation

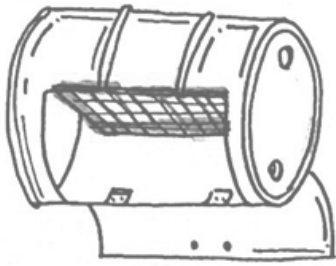
How could people appropriate, personalize, use or develop the public space near their homes? i. e., how to make a public place that is flexible and framed?

The benches built by the inhabitants in front of a building, at the bottom of a tree and around a table appealed to me and I wanted to add my personal touch to this already pleasant space. To energize the space and make it more welcoming, with the aim of sharing a moment around the fire, I built a grill that I then set up next to the benches, usable for all. A rehearsal before the first presentation ended with a fire in the grill. This was an opportunity to check whether it was practically working. I left the grill in place for a few days before returning to hide the grill somewhere inside just before the first public presentation. Some grandmothers were sitting on the benches and asked us to leave and take

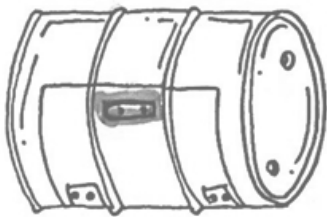
the barbecue with us, as it was obviously a source of concern for them. The benches were on private land, which appears to be public because of the lack of fences and free access for pedestrians. However, the benches were made by the housing association to be used by them. The conflict arose from a misunderstanding of what is private and public.

I then set up my barbecue and grilled some sausages about 50 meters away, next to a bridge, with no housing nearby. This new, isolated location allowed me to validate that my barbecue did generate conviviality and brought people together who enjoyed sharing a meal. However, I still have to validate the relevance of the presence of my barbecue in the Majaka neighborhood.

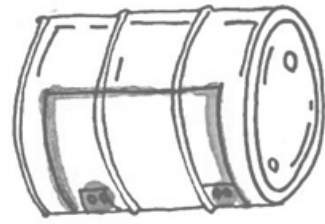
5. ADD THE GRID



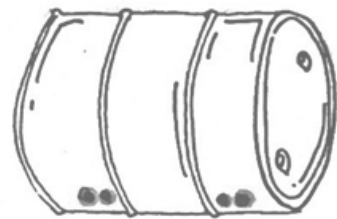
4. ADD THE HANDLE



3. MAKING THE LIDS + ADD THE BRACKET



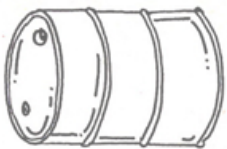
2. MAKING THE HOLES



x1
CIRCULAR
SAW



x14
BOLTS + NUTS



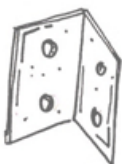
x1.
BARREL



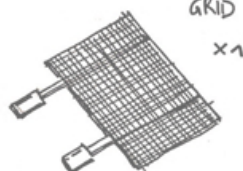
x1
WOODEN
PLATE



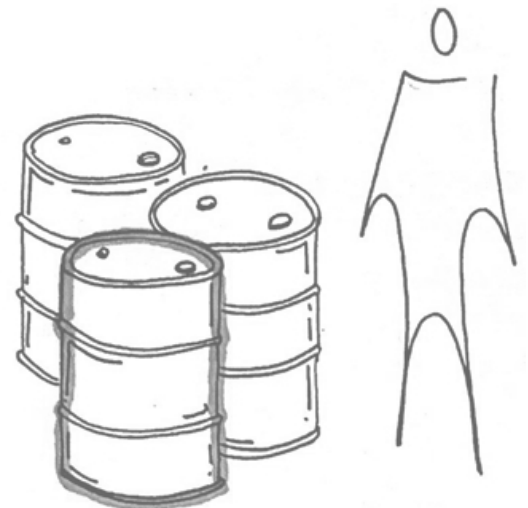
x1 DRILLING
MACHINE



x2
MOBILE
BRACKET



GRID
x1



1. CHOOSING THE RIGHT BARREL



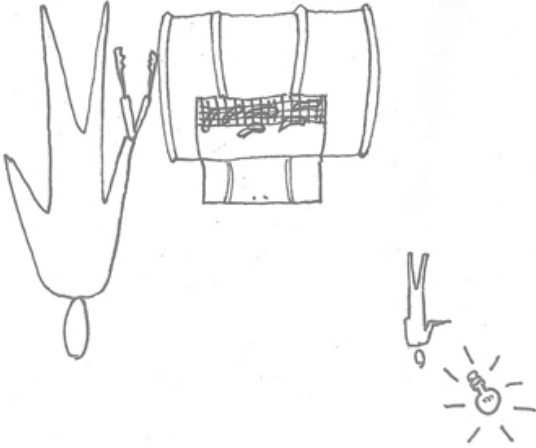
Knowing that my first experience next to the benches had not gone well, I probably should have changed the grill's location. However, after talking to a university lecturer, to whom I recounted my various adventures, a misunderstanding ensued that led me to repeat my experience and reinstall my barbecue in the same place as the first time, next to the benches.

I reorganized the barbecue at the same site as the first time. The objective was to deal with a grilled sausage in exchange for anecdotes or information that would help me better understand this neighborhood and how its inhabitants use the space around them. Twenty-five people reacted to my Facebook post and I expect to receive a lot of information.

On the day of the event, I prepared my barbecue on the spot near the benches, where the grandmothers had asked me to leave. After 10 minutes spent preparing the fire, a first and then a second person came to speak to us in Russian and Estonian. We did not understand them, but they probably asked us to leave. We stayed in the same place because I really wanted to meet the people who had reacted to my post. Unfortunately, 10 minutes later, a neighbor called the firefighters, who arrived to put out the fire, although it was under control. The firemen didn't speak English, but we understood that it is forbidden to make fires in public spaces in Tallinn. Shortly after, two couples living in Majaka who were interested in the event arrived. I was finally able to talk with them about the neighborhood and the relationship of the inhabitants to the public space.

I embarked on this experiment without taking into account the cultural, sociological and geographical dimensions of the neighborhood. This is why my project did not succeed. Indeed, my interest in the neighborhood and my desire to gather the inhabitants around a grill were not enough. My lack of knowledge of the habits and rituals in this neighborhood, and more broadly in the city of Tallinn, led me to make mistakes but also to have a better knowledge of it today.

4. CONSIDER OTHERS.



3. WHAT'S THE LAW?



1. UNDERSTAND THE PLACE



2. WHO USES THIS PLACE



LETTER

It is entirely dependent on individual lifestyles; perhaps they find their own communal spaces for their gatherings as compared to new ones.

I have a good bonding with people, who are working in the store. I found friends on social media, parties, and colleagues at work.

I was invited to a mid-summer party.

The idea of enjoyment for Estonian only drinking but in general people has better parties and activities to enjoy.

I like the quietness of Majaka. I like boring.

Estonians have bad English, and so do I. So communication is not so general and limited conversations.

I revive activities in my own way. I like to eat, celebrate, and dance as well.

Yes, you remind me there was an Estonian friend in Majaka. He was drunk. When we met...

Majka is a quite calm and quiet place with neighbors except a...

We set our small temple in the store. The temple is more English style.

I would love to share, food, but I don't go to the stadium in Tal-teo Tram Stop, but I don't think anything is more like a business.

Many people don't judge me by my building don't like my appearance for their own reason, but we never came into mind if I did...

Not from here, nor there. Now that I am living in Estonia, I started by questioning: How does this neighborhood fit into the urban landscape of Tallinn and the country as a whole?

Identity Dichotomies:

Placemaking between Polarities



Migration, on the whole, represents a dynamic, an ever-changing reality between cities and their population, which is directly tied to the intensifying globalization and urbanization processes. Majaka is the most remarkable neighborhood in Lasnamäe district regarding that matter. Its proximity to Dvigatel fabric, the extension of the tram line, and under Stalinist urban development plans, the entire neighborhood was designed and built to host industrial workers coming from the Soviet Union. Economical and production dynamics keep rapidly changing the neighborhood: the malls, the airport, the real state market, and the building of a new train station (Rail-Baltic Station) are meant for merging people together, superficially and fast. In addition, Ülemiste City plays an important role by attracting talent of foreign professionals, particularly in IT. In my view, it is the perfect scenario to test my previous assumptions. The research methodology I used was interviews. I made them varied from informal conversations to formal ones, at the same time I delivered survey forms for Majaka's residents and people living in other districts of Tallinn.

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The research methodology I used was interviews. I made them varied from informal conversations to formal ones, at the same time I delivered survey forms for Majaka's residents and people living in other districts of Tallinn. My findings made me to understand the change of spaces at individual level as a result of their cultural and religious standards. Hence for the Urban Intervention, I wrote a letter to Majaka: a compilation of the interviews I did to the foreign residents of Majaka, portraying their experiences. I thought about writing a letter to Majaka to represent the gap between the area and its residents. My first conclusion was that there was a lack of placemaking between the international inhabitants and the neighborhood.

To me, letters are a way of communication, either to interact with others or to share individual feelings. That is why I tried to bring those values on a public sphere. Because although migrants are physically present, they are absent in social practices regarding the community. There is no sense of belonging. If I imagine that letters can work also as intangible social spaces that allow people to reflect and have a conversation, then the intervention became a collective narrative. It opened up the discussion on the urge to advance individual practices into communal ones.

According to Kirsten Simonsen and Lasse Koefoed stated that an immigrant and a city full of strangers are both referred to as strangers. The authors questioned how the phenomenon of urban belonging and identity dichotomy manifests in urban fabric and conducted individual interviews with various immigrants (Kirsten Simonsen 2015). This case study has enabled me to better comprehend how opposite feelings of belonging and detaching result uncertain regarding what it means to belong in a city. It also revealed a contradiction on how individuals interpret urban living.

Studio I Urbanization

On the other hand, Amin theorize on urban consciousness as a technique that categorizes intentionally the strangers in cities. He describes the instrumentalization of differentiating and discrimination between minority and majorities interactions, that categorize citizens and non-citizens. What I gathered from that theory is that the access to the urban space is conditionate to one's consumption capacity. This was pointed out in the interviews I conducted.

The final intervention was also the letter: a large paper sheet, which contained the original interview quotes. Again, the objective was to engage the audience and incorporate them into the presentation by asking the audience to come and participate. They had to cut each line, and read it out. It depicts the individual-to-collective and collective-to-individual interaction. They performed the quest for identity and individual existence and brought it out into a shared experience. Each person represents a unique character in order to generate a direct dialogue, which transforms the intangible space into a physical community space. Because of the complexity of the entire study, it actually was extremely difficult to connect individual experiences to a collective level. However, the last intervention was highly effective in transforming an intangible individual experience into a communal space.

To conclude, the emotional component of metropolitan identity should be recognized. The city is seen in many ways as an emotive place. In the individual interviews, two distinct sorts of feeling are prominent. The first is the 'sense of shelter,' which is a sense of belonging associated with home as an emotional and material activity. This involves feelings like familiarity, safety, and (individual or group) memory. The second significant feeling relates to the ambiance or intensity of the city or its many neighborhoods. It refers to instances in which the (social or material) environment take over the senses and instills emotions such as harmony or happiness. The interviews demonstrate a deep affiliation with the city, and the sense of otherness in urban space does not significantly alter this attachment.









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Subject: Studio I Urbanization
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